

GAIN: THE BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE

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310 OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the GAIN Services Worker's role in assisting GAIN participants, through open communication and monthly contacts, to remove barriers to find self-sustaining employment.

311 KEY POINTS

- In every contact with GAIN participants, the GSW must convey the message that he/she is there to help resolve problems to assist the participant succeed in his/her assigned activity and ultimately attain the job he/she wants.
- GSWs must contact all participants in their caseload by telephone on a monthly basis.
- GAIN Services Workers (GSW) and Contracted Case Managers (CCM) shall update the GEARS system within one workday of a case activity occurring for which data is tracked on GEARS.

312 POLICY

.1 Role of the GAIN Services Worker

The GSW plays an integral part in the GAIN program. A GSW is a case manager, career coach, cheerleader, empathetic listener, advocate, teacher and mentor. Through comprehensive case management, which includes kindness, caring, listening and motivating, the GSW can help the participant reach his/her full potential. The GSW needs to believe and needs to inspire the participant to believe, he/she can be successful and have the life he/she wants.

A key goal of interactive case management is to promote rapport and communication and build a trusting bond with participants. The GSW is to facilitate early resolutions of barriers to participation and promote higher levels of active engagement to ultimately help participants secure full-time employment. The relationship between the GSW and the GAIN participant can be a vital determinant in whether the participant will be successful and achieve financial independence.

.11 Building a Bond

During every contact with the participant, whether in person or on the telephone, the GSW is to convey that he/she is there to help the participant achieve his/her desired goals. The GSW needs to establish the link as to how participating in WtW activities and finding employment will lead to increasingly higher levels of self-sufficiency, and the benefits and advantages that will go along with that.

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.12 Begin by Listening

The GSW needs to find out what is important to the participant, the concerns, fears and/or problems which are holding the participant back, and discuss how to achieve the success the participant wants. This can be accomplished by asking open-ended questions and listening carefully to the participant.

When a problem, **other** than Mental Health (MH), Substance Abuse (SA) and/or Domestic Violence (DV), is uncovered, the GSW needs to work with the participant to find a solution. It may be helpful for the GSW to share how he/she has dealt with a similar problem, such as, finding child care or dealing with a difficult co-worker ([see Section 312 .24, Uncovering Barriers](#)).

.13 Beyond Listening

To build a trusting bond with the participant, the GSW provides accurate information and makes referrals to WtW activities, including Specialized Supportive Services. The GSW must explain all documents in terms the participant can understand and answer all questions on GAIN activities, as well as exemptions, compliance, sanctions and good cause. The GSW needs to ensure all supportive services have been authorized/received as needed.

The GSW needs to respond promptly to all telephone calls from participants within one business day or sooner if possible. In addition, it is vital that actions promised, such as authorizing transportation, be completed as promised. Following through is critical in building a relationship, as is frequent, supportive, personal contact.

2. Monthly GAIN Participant Contact

GSWs are to contact all participants, **except** participants receiving Mental Health (MH), Substance Abuse (SA) and/or Domestic Violence services, in their caseloads by telephone on a monthly basis. Prior to contacting participants, the GSWs shall check and ensure payments for all requested supportive services have been authorized for the participants' timely receipt. If the participant is not receiving any supportive services, i.e., ancillary/work related expenses the GSWs shall inform the participant of the supportive services that are available.

The monthly participant contact is required to address WtW participation and identify, address and resolve potential problems as expediently as possible to increase participation and decrease compliance problems. Contacting participants on a regular basis increases the likelihood of problems being identified before they become major barriers to participation and will thus promote achievement of more positive outcomes and greater levels of success.

GSWs will use the Caseload Activity Report as a guide to ensure all participants in his/her caseload are contacted. ([See Monthly GAIN Participant Contact Decision Chart, Section 313.1](#))

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.21 Telephone Contact

The GSW is to follow/complete the GN 6337, Monthly GAIN Participant Contact Checklist when contacting the participant. When the GSW contacts the participant, if the first call is unsuccessful, the GSW is to attempt to contact the participant at least two more times at different times of the day, or on a different day when there may be a better chance of the participant being home.

In general, the GSW should attempt to contact the participant in the early morning, before the participant has a scheduled activity or after 4:30 p.m. when the activity will be completed. The GSW can mail the participant a postcard if the GSW is unable to contact the participant by phone. In addition, all actions and important details of the contact must be documented on GEARS MGPA screen.

.22 Subjects to Address

The areas to cover with each participant during the monthly contact are: attendance; progress; receipt of transportation, child care and ancillary expenses; and the need for referrals to Specialized Supportive Services. The discussion should also include any other issues/problems that the participant may have that will affect his/her participation and the successful completion of the assigned activity. The GSW should also provide information on job openings as they arise that are in the field of interest to the participant.

Note: If the participant is working, the GSW is to review the participant's employment information on GEARS prior to telephoning the participant. This will assist in discussing any issues that may affect participation requirements. For example, if the participant is not working at least 32 hours, an additional component assignment would be needed.

.23 The Message

To provide effective and caring service to participants, GSWs must convey the message that the main reason for making the contact is to help the participant resolve problems and succeed in his/her assigned activity, which will lead to attainment of the desired job/life-style.

To build a positive rapport with the participant, GSWs should ask open-ended questions and encourage an open dialogue that will provide as much information as possible. An open-ended question permits spontaneous and unguided responses.

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Example: What do you like about school/work/Paid Work Experience (WEX)? Is your training program what you thought it would be? How is it different?

In responding to open-ended questions, participants may reveal problems they are experiencing which are interfering with their participation. GSWs need to ask follow-up questions to understand the problem(s) so appropriate assistance can be provided. Participants may reveal they have a MH, SS and/or a DV problem. In these instances, the GSW needs to ensure the participant understands the services available and take appropriate actions.

.24 Uncovering Barriers

If barriers or potential barriers, other than MH, SA and/or DV are discovered, follow-up actions need to be taken to assist the participant. The GSW needs to work with the participant to mutually identify solutions and necessary actions. This may include helping the participant create his/her own plan to resolve the problem. The problem and the resolution must be documented on GEARS for follow-up during the following month's contact.

Example: The participant has a hard time getting to school on time. The GSW can help the participant figure out how this problem can be solved. Ideas may include getting up earlier, getting his/her and the child's clothes ready the night before, completing home work at night instead of in the morning, etc.

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313 DECISION CHARTS

.1 Monthly GAIN Participant Contact Decision Chart

